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UA3/9/5 Commemoration Ceremony of September 11

WKU President's Office

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DR. GARY A. RANDELL
PRESIDENT OF WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY
2002 COMMEMORATION CEREMONY OF SEPTEMBER 11

ONE YEAR AGO TODAY, AS WE WENT ABOUT OUR DAILY LIVES AND
DAILY ROUTINES, *a global tragedy changed our lives*
~~A TERRIBLE THING HAPPENED THAT CAUSED EACH OF~~
~~US TO REACT IN DIFFERENT WAYS: WE ~~CEASED~~ WORRYING ABOUT THE~~
~~TASKS AWAITING US AT OUR OFFICES, AND WORRIED MORE ABOUT~~ *daily family and friends*
~~WHETHER OR NOT WE HAD KISSED OUR CHILDREN OR SPOUSES GOOD-~~
~~BYE THAT MORNING.~~ AS THE REALITY OF THE HORROR BECAME CLEAR,
WE EACH EXPERIENCED THE MOMENT DIFFERENTLY. BUT THROUGH THE
DUST AND RUBBLE, THE PAIN AND SORROW, THE TRAGEDY AND
DISBELIEF, WE FOUND OURSELVES COMING TOGETHER AND
EXPERIENCING THE RESOLVE AND HOPE THAT ~~THE SITUATION~~ *this act of international hatred*
DEMANDED OF EACH AMERICAN, NOT AS INDIVIDUALS, BUT AS ONE
PEOPLE.

ON FRIDAY, SEVERAL MEMBERS OF THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS
GATHERED IN NEW YORK IN HONOR AND IN MEMORY OF VICTIMS,
SURVIVORS AND RESCUE WORKERS. TRENT LOTT, SENATOR FROM
MISSISSIPPI, SAID, "FROM THIS CITY'S ONE DAY OF HORROR - OUT OF ALL
THE LOSS AND SORROW - HAS COME A STRENGTH, A RESOLVE, A

DETERMINATION, WHICH FROM MANHATTAN TO MISSISSIPPI, NOW BINDS US TOGETHER FOR THE MIGHTY WORK THAT LIES AHEAD."



I HEARD A COMMENT ON TV LAST NIGHT - A COMMENTATOR SAID "The terrorists who did this tried to change America forever - well they did / and aren't you proud of the change - horrified at the impetus, but proud of the reaction"

I SAW THAT STRENGTH, RESOLVE AND DETERMINATION IN WESTERN STUDENTS DURING A CANDLELIGHT VIGIL HELD AT THE FINE ARTS CENTER AMPHITHEATER ON SEPTEMBER 13. JUST AS I HAD BEEN MOVED BY THE TRAGIC EVENTS IN NEW YORK, I WAS JUST AS POWERFULLY MOVED BY THE STUDENTS ON THIS CAMPUS. MANY OF OUR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS CAME FORWARD TO OFFER COMFORT. MANY OF THEM COME FROM PLACES WHERE TERRORISM IS A PART OF LIFE. THESE STUDENTS CAME FORWARD AS EXAMPLES THAT THROUGH ALL THE DESPAIR, THERE IS HOPE.

I RECALL A FRESHMAN WHO HAD ONLY BEEN ON CAMPUS FOR A FEW WEEKS. SHE SAID THAT SHE HAD HEARD MUCH TALK OF THE WESTERN FAMILY, BUT THAT SHE DIDN'T BELIEVE IT. THE WAY THE CAMPUS CAME TOGETHER IN AN UNPRECEDENTED SPIRIT OF UNITY AFTER SEPTEMBER 11 MADE HER BELIEVE IN THE WESTERN FAMILY.

I'LL NEVER FORGET A STUDENT WHO CAME FORWARD TO SAY THAT ONLY ONE OTHER TIME HAD SHE SEEN A COMMUNITY COME TOGETHER THE WAY THE WESTERN COMMUNITY WAS COMING TOGETHER IN THE FACE OF TRAGEDY. THAT ONE OTHER TIME WAS WHEN SHE WAS A

STUDENT AT HEATH HIGH SCHOOL IN PADUCAH, AND WITNESSED THE TERRIBLE SCHOOL SHOOTING THAT OCCURRED THERE. SHE SAID SHE WAS AGAIN GRATEFUL TO A COMMUNITY FOR IT'S STRENGTH AND COMPASSION.

ANOTHER STUDENT MOVED THE CROWD TO TEARS WITH HER SPONTANEOUS RENDITION OF THE STAR-SPANGLED BANNER. THAT WAS *INDEED* A BEAUTIFUL MOMENT. IT WAS A MOMENT FULL OF HOPE. HOPE WAS BEING BORN AT SIMILAR CEREMONIES ON CAMPUSES AND IN COMMUNITIES ALL OVER THE WORLD.

SO TODAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2002, WE LOOK BACK AT A YEAR AGO. WE GATHER TO HONOR THOSE LIVES LOST IN NEW YORK, WASHINGTON AND PENNSYLVANIA A YEAR AGO. WE HONOR THE MEMBERS OF OUR MILITARY WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES TO PROTECT OUR FREEDOM AND RESTORE OUR SENSE OF SECURITY. MORE THAN EVEN THAT HOWEVER, WE HAVE GATHERED HERE IN CELEBRATION OF HOPE BECAUSE AMERICA HAS SURVIVED. WE BOWED OUR HEADS IN PRAYER AND IN GRIEF, BUT WE DID NOT BEND OUR KNEES TO THE FORCES OF EVIL THAT BROUGHT THIS TRAGEDY UPON US.

WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY IS ABOUT THE FUTURE. STUDENTS COME HERE TO CREATE FUTURES FOR THEMSELVES. THE EVENTS OF 9-11

DID NOT SUCCEED IN DESTROYING THOSE FUTURES. NOR DID THOSE WHO
PERPETRATED SUCH AN EVENT SUCCEED IN DESTROYING THE HOPE AND
STRENGTH THAT WILL FOREVER ENDURE IN THE HEARTS OF ALL
AMERICANS.

I WANT TO LEAVE YOU TODAY WITH THE WORDS OF POET MAYA
ANGELOU, SPOKEN AT THE PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATION IN 1993.

HISTORY/ DESPITE ITS WRENCHING PAIN/
CANNOT BE UNLIVED/ AND IF FACED
WITH COURAGE, NEED NOT BE LIVED AGAIN. /
LIFT UP YOUR EYES UPON
THE DAY BREAKING FOR YOU. /
GIVE BIRTH AGAIN
TO THE DREAM.

Such is our resolve as Americans.
Such is our resolve as a University
Family ^{As banners proclaimed for most of last year,} WKU Salutes the
American Spirit.
Thank you.